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General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
332nd meeting
Wednesday, 3 April 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Grima ..... (Malta)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair: I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible, as we plan to conclude the general exchange of views today at 4 p.m.

Ms. Dagher (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure and honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the League of Arab States. The Arab Group supports the statement delivered at the Commission's 330th meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission for 2013. We are confident that, with you experience and expertise, you will contribute to the success of this session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The Arab Group stresses that solutions agreed in the multilateral framework under the Charter of the United Nations provide the only sustainable way to address the issues of disarmament and international security.

The Arab Group calls on all Member States to fulfil their obligations individually and collectively through multilateral cooperation. We underscore our belief in the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In that context, the Arab Group believes in the strength of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative body tasked with formulating recommendations on important issues in the field of disarmament. The Commission should be a source of new ideas and new initiatives. There are many simple ideas that could promote the unique character of the Commission, including the holding of informal meetings to test out new ideas.

For the Commission to achieve its objectives, Member States must show the necessary political will to make the most of this machinery and promote disarmament issues. That applies in particular when it comes to the items before the two Working Groups:, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

With regard to the recommendation to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we should all recall that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament placed the highest priority on nuclear disarmament. That has not been sufficiently reflected in the work of the multilateral disarmament machinery. Despite the faltering of the Conference on Disarmament because of a lack of political will, the United Nations in September this year will see an important new initiative be brought before the General Assembly by NAM, advocating for the holding of a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 26 September to mobilize political will for nuclear disarmament worldwide.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-27912 (E)

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Given the role of the Commission as a deliberative body, we hope that Working Group I will generate new ideas concerning a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which could then be transmitted to the high-level meeting for the consideration and support of Heads of State and Government.

We should grant just as much importance to the need to implement multilateral commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament. There is no higher priority in that regard than meeting the deadlines set out in the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The first deadline — on the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction — was not met. We emphasize that the failure to meet the obligations set out at the Review Conference undermines non-proliferation. Despite the readiness to participate on the part of all countries except one, the Middle East conference was not held by the agreed date.

The Arab League urges all parties to fulfil their commitments, as that is the only way for non-proliferation to regain its credibility and to ensure the success of the 2015 Review Conference. The Arab League observed developments in that regard, because this issue should have the position it deserves in the work of the Commission. We hope that the Commission's outcome will ensure the implementation of the obligations emanating from the 2010 Review Conference.

The issue of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is growing in importance in the light of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. It is important to address several issues, the first of which has to do with the surplus production and increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major exporters and producers of weapons. The international community should make efforts to put all production and stockpiles in producing countries under international control. Secondly, joint accountability is the only guarantee against abuse of the imbalance and the use of weapons. Thirdly, these threats against international peace and security must be addressed. In that respect, there is no graver threat to international peace and security, international humanitarian and human rights law and the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation whereby arsenals of weapons are used to dominate peoples and deprive them of their basic human rights.

The Commission plays a critical role in proposing confidence-building measures, which should go beyond the traditional meaning of that term. This agenda item is frequently used to support the narrow interpretation of that term, to serve the interests of a small group.

The Arab Group has set out its highest priorities among the issues to be discussed during the 2013 session of the Commission. It understands that the issues before us impose on us all an onerous task, but that should not limit our ambition but push us to exert greater efforts in our commitment to the principles of justice and non-selectivity, which are crucial for generating the necessary political will for the success of the Commission. The Arab Group underscores its commitment to applying those principles and to working with you, Sir, and the other members of the Commission in order to achieve progress on all issues related to disarmament.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement delivered at the Commission's 330th meeting by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

I should like to convey my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at the present session. I would like to make several points regarding France's position.

We hope that this session will carry forward the constructive momentum within the international community during the past three years. The success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the entry into force of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions and the New START agreement, and the progress made during various Nuclear Security Summits have shown that progress can be made on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda when there is a constructive and pragmatic mindset.

That momentum also shows that efforts to achieve a safer world must be carried out in a comprehensive way and on all fronts — from nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons, to ballistic proliferation and outer space.

Last year's session was productive and useful. We adopted an agenda for the current cycle and held meaningful discussions on disarmament issues. The Commission met our aspirations as a forum for reflection, discussion and the exchange of ideas regarding all areas of disarmament.

In the nuclear domain, our road map is the action plan adopted at the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference. The full implementation of that comprehensive and balanced action plan is the responsibility of all States parties, in particular in the light of the upcoming 2015 Review Conference, the success of which will be depend upon how much progress we have achieved in the implementation of the plan.

Nuclear-weapon States bear particular responsibility under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Following the first follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference of the five permanent members of the Security Council, organized by France last year, Russia will organize the next meeting on 19 and 20 April. That initiative shows the seriousness of nuclear-weapon States when it comes to implementing the action plan and their commitments under the NPT.

However, all States must contribute to disarmament by establishing the security environment required. That requires in particular the resolution of the two major proliferation crises that continue to threaten international peace and security. As we all know, North Korea is continuing its nuclear and ballistic programmes, in violation of Security Council resolutions. The third nuclear test in North Korea, just a few weeks ago, reminds us of the gravity of the situation.

Iran, too, continues its nuclear activities, in violation of the resolutions of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors. Recent developments in the Iranian nuclear programme, in particular the installation of next-generation centrifuges, are of particular concern. The E3+3 of course remains committed to seeking a diplomatic solution. But we must note that the first meeting, held at Almaty, did not lead to a tangible outcome. We hope that, at the next meeting, which will be held at the end of this week, Iran will show genuine will to take specific steps in response to the concerns of the international community.

For France, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime continues to be a priority, particularly through the strengthening of IAEA safeguards and the universalization of the additional protocol. In that regard, we welcome the entry into force of Iraq's and Viet Nam's Additional Protocols, at the end of last year. However, we must also strengthen the other aspects of the multilateral framework by bringing in all States that have not yet done so, particular those listed under annex 2, to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that respect, we commend the recent ratification of the Treaty by Chad.

We must also negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty at the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the Group of Governmental Experts that the First Committee decided to establish last year will facilitate the resumption of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty incorporating all of the stakeholders concerned. We would like to take this opportunity to call on all States concerned to establish without delay a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear purposes, as France, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia have already done.

Moreover, France supports the efforts made to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We regret that it was not possible to hold a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in 2012, as scheduled under the NPT action plan. We reaffirm our support for the efforts of the Facilitator, Mr. Laajava, to ensure that such conference will be held as soon as possible with all the stakeholders concerned. We call on all countries in the region to work constructively in that direction and to refrain from all actions that may move us away from our goal.

France continues to make efforts to promote general and complete disarmament. As I recalled, those efforts relate to every area and aim to universalize and strengthen existing multilateral instruments. The third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which will take place in one week in The Hague, is one of the major meetings of the year. The Convention has been an undeniable success in disarmament and non-proliferation. We must continue in our efforts to make that Convention universal, and we call upon all States that have not yet signed it to do so as soon as possible. The use of such inhumane weapons unfortunately remains topical, given the recent allegations of their use in Syria. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of the

Secretary-General to launch an investigation into all allegations of the use of such weapons in Syria.

We also welcome the outcome of the seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention and the efforts made towards its implementation. We commend the recent ratifications by Cameroon, the Marshall Islands and Nauru, and call on States that have not yet done so to join the Convention, which is a vital tool for our collective security.

Finally, France remains committed to strengthening efforts to combat the proliferation of ballistic missiles. That is a subject of great concern for the international community at a time when prohibited ballistic programmes are being developed, including in the guise of space programmes. France calls for the universalization of The Hague Code of Conduct, which strengthens trust and transparency in this area.

In conclusion, let me turn now to conventional disarmament. France welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234 B), by a vast majority. The text that we arrived at meets France's expectations. We express our warm congratulations to Conference President Ambassador Peter Woolcott and his predecessor, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán, for their tireless efforts to bring the negotiations to fruition.

We also welcome the positive results of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in late summer 2012. The work accomplished there will allow us to improve and strengthen the implementation of that instrument and bring an end to the illicit trafficking and excessive stockpiling of such weapons, whose negative impact on regional crises and international instability we see on a daily basis.

All of those areas of work show the specific things we can achieve together, not in the distant future but in the months and years ahead of us, to build a safer world. We hope that the discussions throughout this session will address all of these challenges. You, sir, can count on the support of our delegation and on our participation in the debates in a constructive spirit.

Mr. Pham Vinh Quang (Viet Nam): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2013 substantive session. My delegation is strongly convinced that, under your able leadership, this year's session will achieve a successful outcome.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made at the Commission's 330th meeting by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since the conclusion of the 2012 substantive session, we have witnessed encouraging developments in the field of disarmament. Those include the successful conclusion of the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Second Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the adoption, last December, of a number of resolutions by the General Assembly on establishing working groups on nuclear disarmament and on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The two United Nations Conferences on the Arms Trade Treaty, although they failed to produce a consensual outcome, did lay significant groundwork for the Treaty, which the General Assembly adopted yesterday (resolution 67/234 B). The Treaty codifies positive elements, such as the recognition of the legitimate interests of States to acquire conventional arms, to exercise their right to self-defence and for peacekeeping operations, and to produce, export, import and transfer conventional arms, as well as the need to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms.

However, enormous challenges remain. The key priority of nuclear disarmament has not been given the attention it deserves, especially when compared to the other two pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), namely, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Nuclear weapons continue to hold a key position in the strategic doctrine of a number of countries. There are few signs that that will cease to be the case in the foreseeable future. Those limitations are coupled, furthermore, with the continued stalemate in the successive sessions of the Disarmament Commission over the past decade. As a result, the Commission has not been able to fulfil its overarching function as the sole deliberative forum on disarmament, entrusted with that task by the international community. In that regard, I would like to highlight a few key issues that, in our view, are critical for further success in the field of disarmament in general and in the work of the Commission in particular.

First, disarmament deliberations and negotiations within the United Nations framework should be conducted in good faith and in accordance with basic principles and practices in this area. Those guiding principles were consensually agreed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and have been widely upheld ever since. They were the outcome of a long process of constructive engagement of countries following the Second World War and serve as a strong mechanism through which the legitimate interests of countries are taken into account and adequately addressed. While we welcome new initiatives to overcome current stalemate in the disarmament bodies, we should bear in mind that the central role of the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and other relevant United Nations bodies, as well as their established rules of procedures, are critical to our success.

Secondly, while devoting adequate attention and resources to a number of issues of great urgency in the field of disarmament, we should accord the highest priority to nuclear disarmament, which is the ultimate goal of humankind. In that connection, we urge the balanced implementation of the 64-point plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, of which the earliest possible convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is crucial. We also call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without any delay, and urge the nuclear-weapon States to take a leading role in the ratification of the Treaty. Pending its entry into force, all States should maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing and other nuclear explosions.

We also support and take part in international efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation, and abide by internationally agreed technical standards for the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Thirdly, deliberations on measures in the field of conventional arms should take into account the legitimate right to self-defence of States, and, thus, the right to import, maintain and produce conventional arms for legitimate defence and security needs. As a country that has gone through and greatly suffered from conflicts and the inhumane use of weapons, Viet Nam understands first-hand the great need for the maintenance of international and regional peace and security, which, in turn, ultimately rests on the establishment of environments conducive to confidence-building, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the principle of non-use of force in international relations. All States should redouble efforts aimed at that goal for future concrete results in the field of disarmament.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our strong support to you, Mr. Chair, as well as our firm commitment to a successful outcome of this important session.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.333

General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
333rd meeting
Wednesday, 3 April 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Grima ..... (Malta)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): Let me begin by joining the speakers who spoke in previous meetings in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2013 substantive session, as well as to the other members of the Bureau on their election. I would like also avail myself of the opportunity to express my appreciation to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, Permanent Representative of Peru, for his efforts as Chair of the Disarmament Commission in 2012.

The Republic of Moldova associates itself with the position of the European Union on the matters discussed at the UNDC. However, we would like to stress several points that we consider to be important both for the international community and for our country.

First of all, allow me to reiterate that we trust that multilateral diplomacy forums such as the Disarmament Commission can bring about progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation if there is true political will.

Secondly, we would like to address two matters, namely, nuclear non-proliferation and conventional arms control.

My country perceives the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a key multilateral instrument for the promotion of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. We support the call for strict and full compliance with the NPT, which would ensure the necessary level of international security — a goal as valid today as in the past. In addition, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is another element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its timely entry into force constitutes a top priority for all States, as is — hopefully — following up on the banning of the production of fissile materials.

In order to achieve genuine security at the international, regional and national levels, progress in nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be complemented by confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Parallel arms-regulation and disarmament processes, with respect to both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms, should be developed.

In that respect, we express our satisfaction at the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 2 April. That is an important element in standardizing the commerce in arms and in excluding negative factors that have affected the security of States in the past. At the same time — and we would like to stress this — when we voted for the Treaty, we expressed our clear understanding that the ATT's provisions would prohibit any arms transfers to non-State actors that are beyond the control of the constitutional authority of a State party. That is our understanding of how the ATT functions.

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13-27918 (E)

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Most important, in the field of conventional weaponry, the Republic of Moldova strongly advocates for a combination of global and regional conventional arms control arrangements. We believe in the implementation of the global arms control arrangements and in the importance of viable and comprehensive regional arrangements — in our particular case, in Europe. My country is therefore a participant in the main European arrangements on conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures, in particular the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and the Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. The Republic of Moldova highly values the contribution of those two cornerstone documents in ensuring a military balance and security and transparency on the European continent over the past two decades. At the same time, given the existing impasse concerning the functioning and the future of the CFE Treaty, we support the efforts aimed at revitalizing and modernizing that important arms control regime.

In that regard, we would welcome an early result on a conventional arms control agreement in Europe. Any future control regime in that respect should be based on a legally binding system of verifiable equipment limits, include information-exchange and verification measures and take full account of other relevant elements of the CFE Treaty. Such a regional regime should be in conformity with, in our case, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, while leaving no room for misinterpretation. Moreover, such a conventional arms-control arrangement would only strengthen respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States parties.

We firmly believe that, among other important elements, a new arrangement should reinforce the principle of host-nation consent to the stationing of foreign military forces on its territory. In that respect, I would like to reiterate our long-standing position regarding the need to finalize the withdrawal of Russian military forces and munitions from the Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova. Let me recall that the stationing of that military presence does not enjoy the consent of the Republic of Moldova and is in contradiction with international commitments and the relevant provisions of our Constitution. Any steps towards increasing or modernizing that foreign military presence is a matter of serious concern for my Government. Furthermore, if considered in the context of the conflict-settlement process, such actions undermine the efforts aimed at finding a peaceful and negotiated solution for the Transnistrian conflict in the framework of the internationally accepted talks under the 5+2 format.

Let me conclude by saying that we share the deep conviction that, through common approaches and efforts by all the parties involved, we can succeed in addressing the entire set of key disarmament issues, both globally and regionally, thus contributing to regional and international security.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to express to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2013 session. We are confident that your chairmanship will be crowned with success. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups. We extend our thanks as well to the Permanent Representative of Peru, Ambassador Román-Morey, for all the efforts he made during his chairmanship of the Commission in 2012.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.330).

My delegation would like to express its full support for the international efforts aimed at building an international community free from the use or threat of use of force, whether nuclear or conventional, a world characterized by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and based on justice, equality, sovereignty and peace among nations and peoples. We are ready and willing to participate in any sincere international effort to achieve that noble goal, to which we all aspire.

My delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole deliberative body in the United Nations disarmament machinery. The absence of real political will by some States has impeded the achievement of a final document on nuclear disarmament for some time now. We hope that this substantive session will achieve tangible results in the field of nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures for conventional weapons.

The maintenance of national security is a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations for all States. It is not an prerogative that only some States enjoy and by virtue of which they may justify their circumvention of the principle of non-proliferation and their application of double standards. That is particularly true as our world is facing many challenges, foremost among which is the need to ban and prohibit nuclear weapons, both vertically and horizontally.

Some nuclear-weapon States do not take their commitment to nuclear disarmament seriously. They deliberately violate their international commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament and disregard the promises they have made to non-nuclear-weapon States.

A case in point is the fact that States biased in favour of Israel are supplying it with assistance that enables it to manufacture and produce nuclear weapons with which to jeopardize the peace and security of the Middle East region. That assistance also includes the means of delivering such weapons and making them capable of reaching far-flung areas. In that connection, we would like to highlight the danger of the continued international silence with regard to Israel's nuclear status. Israel has moved from a position of nuclear ambiguity to declaring that it possesses nuclear weapons, all against the backdrop of a perplexing international silence. That anomalous state of events has continued for many years and caused our peoples to lose faith in the process of nuclear disarmament. It has also encouraged an arms race, despite the obvious negative repercussions this would have on international peace and security.

The hesitation by some international parties to follow up on the implementation of resolutions and findings of previous Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and their selective fulfilment of their commitments detract from their credibility. In that respect, we would mention in particular the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. We would like to recall that an indefinite renewal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by consensus will not be possible without the implementation of that resolution, which provides for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

As members know, in 2003, when it was a member of the Security Council, the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of the Arab Group, took the initiative of presenting a draft resolution on the establishment of a zone free from all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. However, that initiative met with a threat by an influential member of the Council. The text of the draft resolution remains "in blue" to this day.

My country participated in the negotiations that took place in New York, over the course of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The consensus action plan that was agreed upon provided for a conference on the establishment of a zone free from all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East to be held in 2012. Both the United States and Israel stated that the conference could not be convened because of what they called "present conditions in the Middle East". That amounted to setting preconditions for the convening of the conference, namely, a change in the atmosphere prevailing in the region. That was the flimsy excuse given for contravening the international consensus achieved at the 2010 Review Conference and circumventing the viability of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a zone free from all nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. By the same token, it is an attempt to cover up for Israel's continued acquisition of nuclear weapons and its keeping of those nuclear weapons outside any system of international legitimacy or accountability. Such a statement disregards the incontrovertible truth known to all States of the world, namely, that Israel represents the sole nuclear threat in our region. At the time, all States of the region have expressed their intention to participate in the 2012 conference.

My country emphasizes the right of States to acquire nuclear technology and use it for peaceful purposes as an inalienable right, in accordance with article IV of the NPT. The only way to achieve the universality for the Treaty and to put an end to the threat of nuclear weapons is for all States to accede to the Treaty, in particular its article III, and to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreements.

With regard to the agenda item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we emphasize the need to foster international peace and security, taking into consideration the right of States to acquire the means of self-defence and defend their sovereignty, as well as

the right to non-interference in their internal affairs, taking into consideration the particularities and special characteristics of each region in terms of security and defence. Confidence-building measures cannot be a substitute or a precondition for disarmament, despite their importance in creating an environment conducive to disarmament and arms control if they are arrived at in a balanced and comprehensive manner in the various regions of the world.

In conclusion, the most important measure of the credibility of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is to achieve solutions in a fair manner, without recourse to hidden agendas on the part of exporting and influential States.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2013 session. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. It would be difficult for me to congratulate the Chairs of the Working Groups, but I can at least congratulate one of them. I would also like to thank the Chair of the UNDC at the 2012 session for a job well done.

The 2013 UNDC session is taking place the week following the United Nations Final Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, which, unfortunately, was unable to agree on a treaty that would have made a difference for millions of human beings. It was therefore highly encouraging that the General Assembly was able to take corrective measures yesterday and adopt the text of the Arms Trade Treaty by a huge majority.

The ATT Conference illustrated the weakness of a strict interpretation of the consensus principle in multilateral negotiations. Most Member States were ready to accept the draft treaty submitted by the President of the Conference, yet it could not be adopted because less than a handful of delegations objected.

In the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we also see that a small number of countries can block the commencement of negotiations on moving closer to our common objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons as set out by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The 2010 NPT Review Conference adopted a final document (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) that included a comprehensive action plan with clear disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. There has been progress in certain areas, such as the entry into force of the New START agreement and the deliberations on nuclear disarmament of the five permanent members of the Security Council. We are moving forward on securing nuclear material. We are pleased that 119 Member States are implementing the International Atomic Energy Agency additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement, and hopefully more will follow suit.

However, it is obvious that we are lagging behind in realizing the multilateral commitments of the NPT action plan. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains paralysed, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Member States see an urgent need to reach a treaty banning production of fissile materials for weapons purposes and, in the process, to address the issue of existing stockpiles. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not entered into force due to the lack of ratification by annex 2 countries.

The paralysis in the CD has further repercussions for other parts of the disarmament machinery. Indeed, the UNDC has been plagued by a lack of substantive progress for many years. A person born in the year the Commission last made a substantive recommendation is now almost a high school student. My delegation therefore fully agrees with those who fear that the UNDC may increasingly be perceived as marginalized and irrelevant.

That shows the urgency of taking a serious look at how we conduct our business. Norway reiterates that the UNDC would benefit from introducing more flexible working methods. We continue to believe that the UNDC should have a more focused agenda and that the outcome of our meetings could be in the form of a Chair's summary, if there are no agreed recommendations. Yet, deliberations can build trust and subsequently pave the way for common observations and agreements.

Some affirm that the reason for the current standstill in bodies such as the CD and the UNDC is lack of political will. My delegation does not fully share that view: there is a clear political will on the part of most to move forward.

While the traditional multilateral disarmament machinery is struggling, the picture on multilateral arms control is not so bleak. We are making progress in a number of fields.

We are moving forward in implementing the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. A growing number of countries are becoming States Parties to those instruments, which have set fundamental norms adhered to by States that are not formally party to the treaties.

As has been stated by a number of delegations at this session, there is also a growing recognition of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons, as illustrated at the conference on that subject held in Oslo in March.

The General Assembly showed courage last year when it decided to take certain actions in addressing the current impasse in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, such as the establishment of an open-ended working group and the possible future establishment of a working group on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We also hope that the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament to be held in September will contribute to re-energizing multilateralism. Lastly, the General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (resolution 67/234 B) yesterday.

We are at the midpoint of the current three-year cycle of the UNDC. It is expected of us to come up with concrete recommendations next year. It is the hope of my delegation that we can make use of the coming weeks for a constructive conversation on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We should use the time available for genuine deliberations and identify areas where differences could be bridged. It is also the hope of my delegation that the content of our deliberations will be brought forward to the 2014 session.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2013 substantive session. We sincerely believe that your able leadership will steward this session towards a productive outcome on both items on the agenda. You can count on my delegation's full support in discharging your responsibilities. My delegation also commends the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey of Peru, for his contributions to the work of the Commission.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.330). However, I would like to make some points in my national capacity.

Perhaps everyone in this room today shares a consensus that the United Nations-led multilateral disarmament machinery has reached a deadlock. For more than a decade now, hardly any tangible disarmament goals have been achieved through the disarmament machinery in the field of either conventional arms or nuclear weapons. Member States are becoming increasingly frustrated over the impasse, as was witnessed during the just-concluded Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and in the First Committee's deliberations last year. We hope that the current session will break the long-standing impasse by adopting specific recommendations on the agreed agenda items and submitting them to the General Assembly, consistent with the mandate of the Disarmament Commission.

I begin with the first item on this year's agenda, "Nuclear disarmament". Bangladesh strongly believes that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use, either by design or accident, or the threat of their use, pose the greatest threat to humanity. It therefore follows that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee for a peaceful and secure world.

Bangladesh supports the global agenda of nuclear disarmament achieved within the framework of the three clearly defined pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We recognize that, over the years, while significant progress has been achieved in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, specifically in limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in existence continue to threaten humanity. Billions of dollars are being spent to modernize them, despite pressing social needs and growing global expectations for progress in disarmament. Bangladesh therefore calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in fulfilment of their relevant multilateral legal obligations and to immediately stop all plans to further modernize, upgrade, refurbish or extend the lives of their nuclear weapons and related arsenals.

Pending the ultimate goal of complete, irreversible, verifiable and transparent nuclear disarmament,

non-nuclear-weapon States have the legitimate right to receive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. However, commitments in the form of negative security assurances made by nuclear-weapon States have not been adequate to dispel the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, due mainly to the non-binding nature of such commitments. Bangladesh therefore underscores the need for the conclusion of a universal, legally binding instrument on unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of high priority.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and accession to their protocols may be useful interim steps towards securing negative security assurances and achieving global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Nuclear-weapon-free zones may be established in regions where they do not exist in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission principles and guidelines.

Bangladesh emphasizes that nothing in the Non-Proliferation Treaty should be interpreted in a way that affects the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the Treaty. In that regard, Bangladesh demands the full implementation of the relevant action plans agreed at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in respect of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As a responsible member of the international community, Bangladesh has been pursuing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — specifically, to generate electricity — in strict compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and guidelines.

Bangladesh believes that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a practical step in the direction of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. To realize the objective of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a commitment to nuclear disarmament on the part of all States signatories, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, is essential. Bangladesh was the first South Asian annex 2 nation to join the CTBT. Unfortunately, 16 years after its adoption by the General Assembly, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. Therefore, we call upon all States that have yet to ratify the CTBT, especially all nuclear-weapon States and those listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT urgently and unconditionally. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, all States need to maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests or any other form of nuclear explosion and to refrain from activities that undermine the provisions of the CTBT.

Bangladesh has an impeccable non-proliferation record. It is committed to full compliance with the NPT and the CTBT. It has unconditionally opted to remain a non-nuclear-weapon State. Its unequivocal commitment to the full implementation of the NPT in all its aspects emanates from its constitutional obligation to achieve general and complete disarmament. It has also concluded safeguards agreements with the IAEA, including the Additional Protocols. It is also a party to all disarmament-related treaties, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Biological Weapons Convention. In the field of conventional weapons, Bangladesh is fully committed to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We have always been a vocal supporter of the ATT process and yesterday, along with 154 Member States, we voted in favour of resolution 67/234 B adopting the ATT in order to end the misery and human suffering caused by the illegal transfer of conventional arms.

The foregoing is a list of tangible proof of Bangladesh's unswerving commitment to the goal of disarmament.

Mr. Pintado (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Mr. Chair, allow me to commend you for having been elected to preside over the work of this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). You can count on Mexico's support. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups.

I should also like to convey warm congratulations to the representative of Peru, Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, on the manner in which he led Commission last year, and in particular on his efforts to revitalize its working methods.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

I should now like to address a number of additional topics.

Yesterday, the General Assembly adopted with strong backing resolution 67/234 B, thereby approving the text of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and opening the text to the signature of Member States. The adoption of that historic Treaty is good news for those States, such as Mexico, that believe that the fight against the diversion of those weapons is an urgent priority, and that seek to prevent arms transfers to non-authorized users or others that contribute to serious violations of international humanitarian law or human rights.

Beyond that historic event, the adoption by vote of the Treaty in the General Assembly confirmed once again that the undue reliance on consensus always leads to logjam and paralysis in multilateral action. As we have said on numerous occasions, and as the representative of Norway has so eloquently expressed it, consensus should never be understood as a rule but should rather be seen as a goal to which we should aspire without relinquishing the sovereign right of each State to a vote. If consensus is looked at as a goal, knowing that there is a possibility of resorting to the vote, we foster an attitude of flexibility among the delegations that may lead to agreements. While those agreements will not fully satisfy everyone, they do represent the common denominator acceptable to all. The consensus established as a rule, however, incites delegations to stop negotiating and to block agreements because they have a de facto right to veto any decision. Mexico has always opposed the veto in all multilateral forums and will continue to do so with firmness in the future.

The Disarmament Commission is not immune to the problem of conceiving of consensus as a rule. For Mexico, that is explained in part because we have seen more than 14 years without the UNDC having had substantive deliberations in the matter of disarmament. The Commission has not effectively satisfied its mandate, as set forth in resolution S-10/2 of 1978 and as agreed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I do not need to recall here the situation that prevails in Geneva in the Conference on Disarmament. That situation is not justifiable, given the ongoing threat posed by the existence of nuclear weapons, the potential humanitarian impact of a nuclear detonation, be it accidental or provoked, and the uncontrolled and excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons and the expenditures associated with sustaining them.

Mexico has always been a strong promoter of nuclear disarmament. For that reason, we are concerned over the paralysis in the disarmament machinery and a lack of compliance with the action plan agreed during the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as of the commitments undertaken by the States parties. The threat of nuclear weapons endures and continues to threaten humankind, as we saw in the conference held in Oslo last March on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. That conference confirmed that no State is prepared to cope with the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear explosion. Mexico announced at that time its commitment to continuing to study that humanitarian impact at a follow-up conference to be held soon in my country.

As part of our commitment to nuclear disarmament, we urged the General Assembly to adopt resolution 67/56, establishing an open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. That resolution enjoyed the support of three fourths of Assembly members. The working group seeks to create space conducive to constructive discussions in the area of nuclear disarmament that would include civil society organizations and international organizations, as well as all the States Members of the United Nations. Further, its work will be governed by the General Assembly's working methods, and a report on the working group's activities will be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session that will determine its relevance and pertinence.

Mexico will constructively participate in the work of the substantive session of the UNDC so that it can fulfil its mandate. We have voted in favour of the current three-year cycle of deliberations that will conclude next year, addressing in a substantive manner the two items in the Commission's agenda — "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" — as two mutually reinforcing objectives.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): My delegation congratulates you again, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2013 substantive session. We acknowledge your rich experience, and underscore that constructive and positive deliberations on disarmament and non-proliferation issues could be achieved under your leadership at this session. Nigeria also congratulates other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the working groups. My delegation expresses appreciation at this time to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, the immediate past Chair of the Commission, for his personal efforts and leadership, as well as his contributions towards advancing the work of the UNDC at its 2012 substantive session.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and that of the African Group, which was given by my delegation this morning. Let me therefore make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We underscore the important role of the UNDC as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. Despite glaring challenges, we recognize the Commission's potential to articulate a way forward with respect to nuclear disarmament, which remains our highest priority. The delegation of Nigeria continues to believe that through multilateral efforts the total elimination of nuclear weapons can be achieved. We also believe that the continued existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to all humankind. We believe that their continued existence is a clear breach of agreed civil norms. We also believe that the maintenance and modernization of such weapons is not only costly, but also robs nations of resources that could otherwise be used for other, peaceful human endeavours.

Nigeria calls on Member States to mount a determined and unyielding effort to address the continued threat of nuclear weapons with a view to achieving the end goal set forth in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that regard, my delegation supports the ongoing discourse on the principles and elements of a nuclear weapons convention. We believe in the potential of the deliberations at the UNDC, particularly in the current cycle, and the significance that they could achieve by highlighting those urgent issues.

We believe that all hands must be on deck to ensure the convening of a high-level international conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons and to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use of such weapons. In the light of the foregoing, and as a step in the right direction, my delegation welcomes the forthcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament scheduled to take place on 26 September. We call on Member States to promote its success.

Nigeria reiterates the need for Africa to remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We support the objectives of the Treaty of Pelindaba and commend its entry into force. We also support the call for negative security assurances to be given to non-nuclear-weapon States as a minimum commitment on the part of all nuclear-weapon States.

The delegation of Nigeria sees the NPT as a clear road map for addressing the many challenges of nuclear disarmament. We therefore need to promote greater ambition on that matter in both the Conference on Disarmament and the UNDC. Nuclear disarmament undoubtedly remains the ultimate goal. But we all need to play useful and significant roles if we are to preserve the sanctity of the remaining two pillars of non-proliferation and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The assurances and application of the pillars are measures that ensure that we have not come together in our deliberations only to waste quality time in the next few weeks.

One part of our deliberations will focus on general guiding elements for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The other part will naturally centre on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We see that rich mix as a fair and useful attempt to nourish our deliberations on all aspects of disarmament. While the role of the UNDC in developing concepts is well noted, the Commission should take further steps by translating them into reality. In the light of the foregoing, it is imperative to highlight a number of events since the 2012 substantive session of the Commission.

The delegation of Nigeria takes due note of the efforts to address the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and the successful course of events at the Second Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in

Small Arms and Light Weapons in September last year. We commend that effort on the part of its President and all the Member States and hope that the current session will highlight the importance of upholding our commitments in the course of deliberations.

In the General Assembly yesterday, Member States adopted resolution 67/234 B, thereby approving the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). As noted by numerous delegations, it was a seven-year battle and one that has yet to be won in its entirety. As we continue to guide our deliberations at the present session, we hope that the working group dedicated to discussing portions of the historic landmark Treaty would be kind enough to highlight the need for continued elaboration of the usefulness of the ATT.

For my country, my region, the entire African continent and the world at large, Nigeria also wishes to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contributions to disarmament measures and other future challenges. My delegation notes the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly for its provision of capacity-building and technical assistance to many States on the Africa continent.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I would like to add my voice to the chorus of previous speakers who have extended to you, Sir, our most heartfelt congratulations on your election as Chair of the 2013 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. You can count on the support of my delegation. We will contribute our utmost to the success of the work of the session. Our congratulations are also addressed to all the members of the Bureau.

I would like to express my great appreciation to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey of Peru, who led the Commission with such tact, professionalism and expertise during the work of the previous session, with the invaluable assistance of Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and the support of the secretariat of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Their untiring efforts have enabled the Commission to make a number of precise recommendations with regard to the agenda and the programme of the current cycle, which will conclude in 2014. My experience as a former Chair of the Commission allows me to affirm that it is not an easy job, and I would sincerely like to congratulate all those who have contributed to its accomplishment.

Benin wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Everyone agrees on the importance of the Disarmament Commission and its role as the sole deliberative body of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. That role is rightly reaffirmed at each session of the Commission, which remains one of the most appropriate for the in-depth consideration of specific questions related to disarmament with a view to seeking consensus solutions so yearned for by our peoples. However, we must acknowledge that previous cycles of sessions of the Commission have not met legitimate expectations, given its inability over the past dozen years or so to translate its deliberations into tangible outcomes and its failure to produce the substantial results that have been within its reach.

The situation represents a sure threat to its existence even if there is an unavoidable need for it. Indeed, need I recall that the Disarmament Commission was created in response to the absolute necessity to offer Member States a forum for an exchange of views and deliberations on the major challenges that humankind faces in the field of disarmament, with a view to building a safer world free of weapons of mass destruction and increasingly sophisticated conventional weapons. Their mere existence and uncontrolled accumulation and proliferation pose an alarming threat to the planet and its biosphere.

The current status quo in disarmament negotiations represents a danger for all States, as it inexorably encourages an arms race that continues to devour enormous resources, to the detriment of the existing need for economic and social development. We must spare no effort to advance the agenda for disarmament talks in the current cycle towards the adoption of a policy of small steps allowing concrete progress to be made where possible, without awaiting agreement on all items on the agenda. Benin would like to see the Disarmament Commission play its rightful role in favour of the manifest political will of Member States to move disarmament forward.

My country attaches great importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone for building a safer world, and invites all

States to accede to and comply with it. We welcome the fact that Africa has become a nuclear-weapon-free zone with the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba. We strongly encourage all regions of the world to commit themselves decisively to the positive path of the creation of such zones. In that respect, Benin wishes to express its dissatisfaction at the failure to convene a conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in 2012, and wishes to see intensified efforts to convene as soon as possible such a conference, the original announcement of which had given rise to such great hope in the international community. The international community rightly believes that the success of such a conference would serve as a major step to bringing peace to the region.

Benin welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty and invites countries to sign and ratify it in order to ensure its entry into force as rapidly as possible. We also hope to see its implementation contribute to putting an end to the suffering of populations, especially in Africa, where the illicit trafficking in arms constitutes an obstacle to the fulfilment of the development ambitions of its States. My country would like to see the shortcomings that were noted by a number of countries and gave rise to their reservations about the Treaty be addressed so that it may rapidly enter into force and achieve universality in order to attain a more efficient implementation.

Benin wishes to reiterate its satisfaction at the successful conclusion of the Second Conference to Review Progress Made in Implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nigeria was so successful in leading in August 2012. We welcome the achievement of consensus at the Conference on the path to be followed to prevent the proliferation of certain types of weapons which threaten humankind with serious harm. It is very important that the international community be able to revive the pursuit of efforts in the field of disarmament and strengthen the pillars of peace and international security, because peace is an essential precondition for solving all the other challenges humankind faces, be they economic, social or environmental.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like almost all other delegations, I would like to begin by conveying our congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups on their appointment. At the same time, I would like to reiterate Ecuador's high regard and confidence in you, Ambassador, and your country, Malta. I would also like to express our thanks to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey of Peru for his work during the previous session.

The delegation of Ecuador wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representatives of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Both statements adequately reflect the various ideas and points of view of our delegation. For that reason, I will not mention them all again.

Our delegation wishes to express its full commitment to the decisions and agreements taken in the context of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. In doing so, we would also like to express our complete support for the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the deliberative body of the Organization's disarmament machinery, whose function is to consider and make recommendations on the different issues in the area of disarmament. We also support the Conference on Disarmament as the sole negotiating forum on that subject.

Ecuador is the first country in the world to have recognized in its Constitution the rights of nature, which therefore ceases to be an object and becomes a subject. The Constitution points out that nature — that entity within which life reproduces and takes place — has the right to full respect for its existence, preservation and the regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes. In recognizing those rights, we are completing the cycle of a comprehensive and complementary relationship with the rights of human beings. In that context, Ecuador opposes and condemns the very existence of weapons of mass destruction on the face of Earth. It believes that their use or threat of use is a crime against nature and, of course, humankind.

In that regard, like many other States, Ecuador believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be parallel, interrelated and conclusive processes. Our goal must be to preserve the regime established by the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Non-compliance with its articles and provisions threatens to bring about the irrevocable failure of the entire regime and its three

pillars. Moreover, my country views with great concern the fact that such non-compliance unnecessarily jeopardizes the pillars that support the structure of the regime established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which could gradually and quietly collapse.

In that context, subject to the pending multilateral negotiations and agreements, in particular the nuclear weapons convention, my delegation hopes for the early establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist. In that way, we would be taking substantial steps forward in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

In the same vein, my delegation strongly supports the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the decision of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT on that issue. In that regard, we call on those concerned to make every effort for the holding of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as soon as possible.

Ecuador believes it to be appropriate that the Disarmament Commission has assigned the deliberations on the agenda item "Practical confidence-building in the field of conventional weapons" to Working Group II. That item is key to Ecuador, as it believes that such measures are a significant support to peace, security and stability, in particular at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels. Moreover, we believe that such measures take on their true value at those levels notwithstanding multilateral developments.

Along those lines, Ecuador, along with the other countries of the Union of South American Nations, has been promoting and supporting the so-called confidence and security-building measures, which can be summed up in the following categories: information exchange and transparency regarding defence systems and defence expenditure; notifications of military activity; a segment on security measures; a section on assurances; and compliance and verification measures. It is an initial process that is supported by all countries of the South American region, including, of course, the firm backing of my country, Ecuador.

In addition, Ecuador shares and resolutely supports the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that context, it welcomes the agreements reached at the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action of 2012. We are fully committed to the obligations arising from such agreements.

In that regard, Ecuador supports the position that weapons such as anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions should be destroyed and banned. They are a threat to innocent civilians, as happens in some border regions of my country. Ecuador sees its borders as areas for integration and development. That requires a minimum level of security for its citizens and for the economic, trade, cultural or social exchanges that imbue those border regions with a daily existence and make them areas of intrinsic value as a result of the interchanges developing there.

Finally, trust is built, among other things, on the basis of an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations of States in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Ecuador has always respected the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, political independence, territorial integrity, self-determination and the right to self-defence.

Along those lines, we hope for the same from other States. Respect for such fundamental principles is essential to every consensus process. We believe that the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by a recorded vote, not by consensus, is due, among other reasons, to the fact that its text undermines such principles.

The future adoption of international security instruments without the required consensus will therefore lead only to greater scepticism and mistrust among the international community. Nevertheless, my delegation has come to this meeting in a spirit of hope for the opportunities provided by multilateral forums such as that which brings us together today.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): Before I address the point I would like to make, allow me first, since this is the first time I am taking the floor, to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau and to pay tribute to Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2012 substantive session, for his leadership and skills. I would also like to thank the delegations of Lebanon, Nigeria and Indonesia for delivering statements on behalf of the groups to which we belong, respectively the Group of Arab States, the African States and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We believe in the usefulness of the deliberative role of the UNDC, and we remain committed to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world through nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. And we believe, as we have always stated, that this can be achieved only if obligations are fulfilled and commitments met.

With regard to conventional weapons, we welcome the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, although we regret that it was not adopted by consensus. We consider confidence-building measures to be very important, and we look forward to fruitful discussions in Working Group II.

I am essentially taking the floor to make a proposal, with the Commission's permission. My intention is not to discuss it now in the plenary. It is more relevant to the Working Group, but I would like to take this opportunity just to share the proposal with our colleagues so there is no surprise tomorrow or when we meet in Working Group I, in particular.

We have started a discussion in the Working Group and have spent a long time negotiating the paragraphs that are in the first section of the Chair's paper on disarmament. We consider that the UNDC has a mandate of deliberations and has to come to conclusions in the format of recommendations to the General Assembly. On that basis, we consider that the Commission does not have to necessarily agree on a long list of paragraphs as a preamble to the recommendations, which remain the core mandate of the UNDC.

In that connection, we would like to suggest that we continue the deliberations on those paragraphs very briefly, but not with the objective of agreeing on their formulations and wording, but just for exchanging views on them, and that we then move to the second section of the paper, which contains the recommendations we would need to negotiate in detail and that would require a long time. Once we agree on the recommendations, we can come back and maybe consider agreeing on three or five paragraphs to serve as chapeaux and set the context for our recommendations. Otherwise, negotiating the paragraphs in the first section of the working paper will take too long, and we are not sure we will come to a conclusion, while the mandate is to come to conclusions on the recommendations. That is my proposal for the delegations so we can discuss it in the context of the Working Group tomorrow.

The Chair: I thank the representative of Morocco for his useful comments. While it may appear that we have plenty of time — three weeks — time is actually very limited. I believe that there are actually many issues that need to be considered. For that reason, I encourage not just Working Group I, but both Working Groups to consider that timely proposal and to seek to focus primarily on the recommendations and to make optimal use of the time available to the Commission. As I said in my opening remarks, we need to focus on the middle ground. We need to focus on areas where convergence is possible. So I encourage both Working Groups to take up and consider the timely proposal made by the representative of Morocco.

We have received several requests for the right of reply. I would recall that, in accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10 of annex V of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

> "The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.
>
> "The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to ten minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes."

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply concerning the remarks made by the representative of the French delegation this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.332) and other remarks made by the representative of the United Kingdom on the first day of the general debate of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (see A/CN.10/PV.330). Both representatives made reference to the so-called missile and nuclear programme of North Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions.

Concerning those two remarks, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been contemplating the reason for the interventions by those two countries, and has come to the conclusion that it is due to a lack of understanding of the reality unfolding before the international community. That reality is becoming very dangerous and is reaching a critical, irreversible point, increasing the concern of the countries of the international community. Therefore, to promote the understanding of those two countries, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to clarify its position as follows.

First, with regard to the so-called missile programme, I want to correct a misrepresentation. Reference was made to a satellite launch. That is not a missile; it was carried by a missile. It was a satellite launched for peaceful purposes in exercise of the legitimate right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a sovereign State and a State party to the Outer Space Treaty, which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea signed and ratified in March 2009.

With regard to the satellite launch last December, even the United States military establishment — the North American Aerospace Defense Command — acknowledged that it is a satellite. It has been launched into orbit. It is orbiting the Earth. Since that is their angle, we do they misrepresent it as a missile? This is due only to the political interests of the United States.

The question is: Why does the United States involve the international community and bring this issue to the Security Council, misusing its permanent seat on that body? The permanent seat was not given to the United States to help it infringe upon the sovereignty of any other State Member of the United Nations. As for the United States, how many missiles has it launched? How many satellites has it launched? It is number one — the champion. How, then, can it raise this issue regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea? This is self-contradictory, and it is self-evident that it is the United States that is first to blame for launching so many satellites and ballistic missiles, for having excessive production and stockpiles of missiles, and for threatening international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation would therefore like the French delegation to have a clear understanding of this reality.

Secondly, let me turn to what was referred to as our nuclear programme and tests. It is well known that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted a third nuclear test in January in response to Security Council resolution 2087 (2013) against our satellite launch, which was a reflection of the extreme hostility of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We had no other option but to conduct a third nuclear test, which was successful and very powerful, and was undertaken in self-defense.

Very serious consideration is to be given to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. If the nuclear issue is to be considered by the Security Council, it is the United States that should first be addressed. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been living in a unique and extraordinary security environment that no other country can imagine. We, our people, have been living for 60 years under nuclear blackmail. It was in 1957 that the United States first brought a nuclear weapon into South Korea. By the 1970s, the number of such weapons had increased to over 1,000. We can compare the power of these bombs to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Only two bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and how many people died? There is a stockpile of more than 1,000 in South Korea. We cannot even imagine how much suffering they would cause.

The escalation is heading towards nuclear war at this point in time. On 1 March, the United States and South Korea started the largest-ever nuclear war-exercise. It involves the most sophisticated means of delivery for nuclear weapons. One historic deployment method is the B-2 A stealth strategic bomber from the United States mainland. Just three days ago, it flew across the Pacific Ocean to South Korea, and was seen on CNN dropping bombs in carpet-bombing fashion, as seen in Afghanistan and Iraq. Everyone saw it. The level of danger is increasing beyond control. It is not a question of whether or not war will break out; it is a question of when.

The United States is raising the nuclear blackmail to an extreme and threatening the survival of the Korean nation so that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no option but to announce our first nuclear pre-emptive strike, just as the United States announced by listing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea among possible pre-emptive nuclear strikes. The United States no longer has the monopoly on nuclear pre-emptive strikes. This is another additional element that the French, British and United States delegations should understand.

Thirdly, let me address the double standards of the Security Council regarding those who actively raised the issue of the legitimate and defensive satellite launch and nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: the United States, South Korea and Japan. A few days after that resolution was adopted, those three States wasted no time in launching their own satellite. The United States launched a long-range interceptive missile. This shows their double standards. Why did the Security Council remain quiet? The Security Council remains silent and has still taken no action. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would

therefore like to recommend that those two countries tell the United States to drop its hostile policy of nuclear blackmail before bringing up other issues, which is an unrealistic approach.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): During this session of the Commission, we have heard two delegations make remarks regarding the nuclear programme of my country. This morning, we heard one statement expressing concern over the new generation of centrifuges in Iran. I would like simply to assure that delegation that neither the old nor the new generation of centrifuges, neither in Iran nor in any other part of the world which is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is a source of concern. The centrifuges are under the safeguards of and verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency as the sole international technical body to verify such compliance.

However, there is some cause for concern. The main one, which we discussed this morning in Working Group I, is the danger posed by nuclear weapons. Those who claim to be concerned regarding the work of centrifuges own hundreds of thousands of nuclear weapons, in clear non-compliance with their legal obligations under the NPT.

What is much worse is that they try to use it to threaten other countries with those weapons. Those countries are members of NATO. I would like to refer to the most recent strategic concept of that organization, which says that NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. In other paragraphs, it states that NATO will rely on the nuclear weapons of its three nuclear-weapon States. That is in complete contradiction with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Therefore, let us be honest and not try to divert the attention of global public opinion from the real threat, which is the danger of the existence of nuclear arsenals.

Mr. Lim Sang-beom (Republic of Korea): As the representative of North Korea mentioned a joint exercise in the Republic of Korea, allow me to respond to that. I would like to clarify that joint exercises are designed to enhance our combined readiness against North Korea's military actions. They are purely defensive in nature.

North Korea has repeated again that it categorically rejects Security Council resolutions and that it is not bound by any of those obligations by which the rest of Member States abide in a faithful and consistent manner. Let me point out Articles 25 and 48 of the Charter of the United Nations, the latter of which states that

> "[t]he action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations".

As a result, and as Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013) were adopted under Chapter VII, all Member States, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, must carry out their obligations under the Charter. Article 4 of the Charter clearly restricts membership of the United Nations to peace-loving States that accept and carry out their Charter obligations. If North Korea is so insistent on rejecting that basic duty, I cannot but question whether it is qualified to be among us.

I would like to stress that not only the Security Council but also more than 80 Member States — I repeat, 80 Member States — have issued statements condemning North Korea's third nuclear test and urging it to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I want to point out that North Korea receives over $10 million of assistance from the United Nations annually. It is a great pity that North Korean authorities should abandon their basic duty to their people by squandering scarce resources on nuclear missile development. North Korea should use its limited resources to improve the lives of its people rather than wasting them on the development of nuclear weapons and missiles. It is estimated that North Korea has invested more than $3 billion in the development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programme. That is equivalent to the amount needed to procure 10 million tons of grain, which is enough to supply its entire population for roughly three years. We urge North Korea to put the vast amount of its resources that it clearly wastes on nuclear and missile development towards saving its people from their dire daily circumstances.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, the representative of South Korea has left no stone unturned in his effort to deceive and mislead the international community.

Concerning the nuclear weapons resolution, he has again quoted the wrong articles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Democratic People's Republic of

Korea totally rejected the Security Council resolution due to issues concerning its sovereignty, which was flagrantly, openly and gravely infringed upon by the Security Council upon the initiative of the largest nuclear-weapon State, the United States. The United States has posed the greatest threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's sovereignty, national interests and integrity and the survival of our nation as an entire nation, including the South Korean population.

South Korea did not hesitate to welcome the nuclear weapons of the United States. No other nation in the world allows external nuclear weapons on its own territory. Even the European countries held a discussion, after the end of the Cold War between east and west, and asked the United States to remove its nuclear weapons. It is now a controversial issue. But why is South Korea so hell-bent on clinging to the nuclear umbrella of the United States? That nuclear umbrella will not guarantee its security.

The entire Korean nation has been suffering for 60 years now, as I stated earlier, in my first statement in exercise of the right of reply. If we compare over 1,000 nuclear weapons to the two single bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is clear that the power of those 1,000 nuclear weapons will be more than enough to annihilate and eliminate the Korean nation. That is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no option but to go nuclear and to become a nuclear-weapon State.

Concerning the article he quoted, as I said, it is the wrong article. Peace and security are the core, fundamental mission of the Security Council's mandate. However, there is a great question mark. What about the United States? It has engaged in blackmail, listing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the axis of evil alongside Iran and Iraq, and as a target for pre-emptive nuclear strike.

Concerning what he called the living conditions of the population of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there is no need for him to worry. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has to defend its population and its sovereignty, and it is the United States' hostility that compelled to increase our power to defend our sovereignty and survival.

South Korea is the one that should take care of its own population. South Korea is the country with the world's highest suicide rate. It is number one. Why is that the case? Are South Koreans killing themselves because of their good living conditions? I need to ask South Korea.

Mr. Lim Sang-beom (Republic of Korea): I am sorry to have to take the floor again and promise to be brief. We affirm that there exist no nuclear weapons on our territory and that it remains our unchanged policy to observe and implement the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, to which North Korea is also a party.

Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations states that

> "[a]ll Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

I would simply like to reiterate that point.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.